

From the experience of older countries where systems of medical inspection have been in operation for some time it is not thought necessary to examine each child more than twice, or at the most three times, in the course of his primary school life, except in cases of suspected or proved abnormality. It was accordingly decided to begin by regular inspection of the children in class S2—that is, of children averaging ten to eleven years of age. As a rule, the Medical Inspector inspects these children in any school on the first day of his visit, and on the second day examines special cases from other classes brought under his notice by the head teacher or selected by himself.

An important part of the Inspectors' work is to train the teachers to do their share of medical inspection, for in those countries where the system is most successful the co-operation of the teachers has been found to be a most important factor. Accordingly, the Medical Inspector is always accompanied by a teacher, who in this way learns much as to the aims and methods of medical inspection.

This individual training is supplemented by courses of Saturday lectures given to the teachers residing in or near each important centre visited. More extensive courses of lectures are given to training-college students. Notices are sent to parents of children in cases where the inspection shows that medical or dental treatment is required; no cases are, however, treated by the Inspectors; parents are recommended to take their children to their own medical advisers. School authorities and parents generally appear to welcome the new departure. In a large number of cases it has been found that children with notified defects have received treatment accordingly.

Owing to the facts that the Medical Inspectors had to work out a common standard for the assessment of various defects, that the teachers were new to the work, and that the natural tendency at the outset was to bring only abnormal cases under the notice of the Inspectors, it would be misleading to publish even a summary of the reports of the work of the first few months. It is, however, already evident that even with the limitation of two inspections for each child in the eight years for the ages six to fourteen, the number of officers employed at present is too small, and it is proposed to increase their number very shortly.

CLASS-BOOKS AND SCHOOL AND CLASS LIBRARIES.

At the beginning of the year 1912 the system of free class-books was extended to S5 and S6, and for all classes the conditions were modified by giving Education Boards the option of (1) supplying miscellaneous readers free to pupils, or (2) requiring the pupils to provide miscellaneous readers (except in necessitous cases and in cases where newly entered pupils had already purchased miscellaneous readers different from those in use in the school). In the latter alternative the money not used for supplying miscellaneous readers was to be available under certain conditions for supplying paper to be used instead of slates. This option was given in deference to representations that some teachers considered that pupils should have a reading-book for home preparation.

With the close of the year the grants for the general free class-books were discontinued, and in lieu thereof provision was made for establishing and maintaining school and class libraries. These grants come under two heads:—

- (a.) A capitation grant at the rate of 3d. per head on the average attendance is paid annually to Boards for the purpose of supplying schools with supplementary continuous readers in sufficient numbers for class-reading in P to S6 inclusive, and also for the free supply of class-books in necessitous cases or in cases where a newly entered pupil has already purchased elsewhere class-books different from those in use in the school. After provision has been made for the supply of such books, the balance of the grant, if any, is to be spent on approved books suitable for individual reading in school or at home.
- (b.) Further to encourage school libraries provision has been made for the payment of subsidies of £1 for £1 on moneys raised by voluntary contributions for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, or increasing the utility of school libraries that contain books suitable for individual reading in school or at home. It was, of course, necessary to fix certain limits to the amounts of the subsidies. For the year ending 31st December, 1913, the subsidies on moneys so